

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for producing 4,4'-biphenol, comprising the steps of:
preparing serially arranged reaction bathes for two or more steps; and
5 carrying out a debutylation reaction of 3,3',5,5'-tetra-t-butyl-4,4'-biphenol sequentially in the presence of an acid catalyst in a reaction solvent by supplying at least one kind of phenols selected from the group consisting of phenol, monoalkylphenols, dialkylphenols, and trialkylphenols, in a proportion of at least 0.5 mole part relative to one mole part of 3,3',5,5'-tetra-t-butyl-4,4'-biphenol, to each reaction bath as a solvent for
10 addition,

wherein the number of carbon atoms of alkyl groups in alkylphenols consisting of said monoalkylphenols, said dialkylphenols, and said trialkylphenols, is each independently in the range of 1 to 4, and

15 wherein a solvent for addition to a reaction bath for the latter step is at least one kind of said phenols having a smaller average number of alkyl groups than phenols used as a solvent for addition to a reaction bath for the former step.

2. The method according to Claim 1, wherein said monoalkylphenols, dialkylphenols, and trialkylphenols are monobutylphenols, dibutylphenols and tributylphenols, respectively.

20 3. The method according to Claim 1, wherein said at least one kind of phenols is phenol, p-t-butylphenol, or a mixture of phenol and p-t-butylphenol.

4. The method according to Claim 1, wherein, when a reaction apparatus comprising serially arranged reaction bathes for two steps is used, the solvent for addition to a reaction bath for the former step is a solvent having an average number of alkyl groups
25 ranging from 0.8 to 3, and the solvent for addition to a reaction bath for the latter step is a solvent having an average number ranging from 0 to 0.5.

5. The method according to Claim 1, wherein a total amount of solvents contained in all reaction bathes is from 1 to 10 mole parts per one mole part of 3,3',5,5'-tetra-t-butyl-4,4'-biphenol.

30 6. The method according to Claim 1, wherein said acid catalyst is an organic sulfonic acid.

7. The method according to Claim 1, wherein a reaction temperature for the debutylation reaction is from 150 to 250°C.

8. The method according to Claim 1, wherein the number of said reaction bathes is from 2 to 5 steps.

5 9. The method according to Claim 1, wherein the reaction bathes for two or more steps are independent bathes arranged each other in series.

10. The method according to Claim 1, wherein the reaction bathes for two or more steps are formed by serially partitioning the interior of a single reaction vessel into a multiple reaction segments.

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